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# For the love of experience: changing the experience economy discourse

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# CHAPTER 4

Fun is a good thing,
but only when it spoils
nothing better.

GEORGE SANTAYANA,
THE SENSE OF BEAUTY,
1988, P.155

# Effects of experience in an integrative theory

## 4.1 Introduction

In chapter 2 I argued that there are three main limitations within current marketing and business literature on experiences, in three different approaches of the subject: the environment-, effect-, and encounter-centred approach. In chapter 3 I have presented a spectrum of experience-concepts to offset the bias within the environment-centred approach of the experience economy discourse and in this chapter I will work towards offsetting the bias of the effect-centred approach: the focus on the management of hedonic effects. As I argued in the discussion of this bias in paragraph 2.4.2, authors who use the effect-centred approach of experience view experiences as the positive feelings and emotions that organizations want to instil in individuals and focus mainly on the management of these effects. They focus on the hedonic effects that they claim individuals seek and seem especially interested in the causal relations between their actions and the hedonic effects that should result from these. I then explained why I see this approach as problematic: by focusing primarily on the role of organizations in managing and producing predetermined hedonic effects, the role of the individual and the existence of other effects are neglected. In this chapter I will therefore answer the research question: "Which kinds of effects can experiences have from an individual's perspective?"

First I will discuss why the neglect of other effects besides or beyond hedonic effects is problematic and offer alternative views on effects with which the bias towards hedonic effects can be offset. I will then explain why I see the focus on managing effects as part of a broader tradition of goal-rationality and the implications of this goal-rational orientation. By presenting several theories of education, learning and the construction of meaning I will explain what I view as a useful and viable alternative for this goal-rational orientation. Finally I will use these theories to show that the effect-centred approach to experiences with its focus on the management of hedonic effects is flawed because of an apparent mismatch between the goals that organizations are advised to achieve in current business and marketing literature on the experience economy and the means that are proposed for achieving these goals.

An overview of various different effects on individuals will result in a spectrum of experience-effects that will be presented at the end of this chapter. This spectrum is meant to offer clarity in the often-confusing discourse on the effects of experiences and the role organizations play or should play in the experience economy by showing that there are multiple perspectives on this subject. Besides paying attention to what roles the organization and individuals play in determining what the effects of an experience will be, I will also focus on effects that go beyond hedonic effects. As was already shown in the overview of experience definitions in chapter 2, the effects of experiences do not just consist of sensory or other pleasures but are mostly stated in terms of knowledge and skills. Whether one is discussing, studying, organizing for, or in some other way dealing with experiences, one should first reflect on what effects would be valuable for the individual and what role one can play in the emergence of these effects.

## 4.2 From hedonic effects towards a broader view on psychological effects

The focus on hedonic effects can be perceived in many diverse areas of interest, although it is difficult to find a universally accepted definition of what hedonic effects are. Kahneman, Diener and Schwarz define hedonics as the study of "what makes experiences and life pleasant or unpleasant" (1999, p. ix). However, the unpleasant effects are often not part of the discussions within the effect-centred approach of experience. Usually the management of hedonic effects revolves around the management of positive, or pleasurable, hedonic effects for individuals as could be seen also in the examples of experience-effects given in paragraph 2.4.2. There are differences between hedonist schools of thought on what the goal in life is (e.g. do only pleasures in the present moment count or do we also have to take into account memories and expectations of past and future pleasures? Does pleasure have to lead to happiness or doesn't it? Do we have to add up separate pleasures and detract unpleasures or do we just have to sum up all the pleasures in one life?) but in general there seems to be agreement on Kahneman et al's (1999) statement that pleasure and unpleasure are the focal points of what interests hedonists.

One element of hedonic effects that is often alluded to is the immediate sensuous stimulation or gratification of the individual (Vasilyuk, 1991; Campbell, 2002; Hirschman & Holbrook, 1982; Licht, 2004; Wiberg, 2003). In their discussion of various types of pleasurable effects Tiger (1992) and Jordan (2000) call these effects 'Physio-pleasures', while Kubovy (1999) uses the term 'pleasures of the body', both denoting positive effects that are related to the body and derived from the sensory organs. The idea that immediate gratification and sensuous pleasure are the goal in life, is usually accredited to Aristippus of Cyrene, living in the 4th and 3rd century BC, who is seen as the founder of the Cyrenaic School of Philosophy. Aristippus held that bodily indulgences are the goal in life, which, although it is difficult to find factual information on this Greek philosopher, has resulted in many scandalous stories on his life (IEP, 2009). However, according to many theorists hedonism is not constricted to sensory pleasures but to self-interest and pleasure in general. Bentham (1748-1832), who is often seen as the founding father of hedonistic utilitarianism, sees all human activity as being "under the governance of two sovereign masters, *pain* and *pleasure*" (Bentham, 1907, p. I:1), and claims that pleasure can result from many activities, but that it is always one and the same sensation. The only differences between pleasures are of a quantitative nature, in terms of intensity, duration, certainty, propinquity (nearness or remoteness in time), fecundity (probability that it will lead to other pleasures), purity (not mixed with contrary sensations of pain) and extent (how many persons are affected by the pleasure) (Bentham, 1907, pp. IV:1-7). Bentham's hedonistic utilitarianism has received much criticism though. Some examples of criticism that his theory has received are that he equates pleasure with happiness and takes this to be the goal of life, that he does not take into account the intention of actions, the existence of evil pleasures or qualitative differences between pleasures, and that his hedonistic calculus is flawed when it comes to interpersonal comparisons (Nussbaum, 2004a). Nozick (1975) has developed a thought experiment to explain the critique on hedonistic thought.

### 4.2.1 Critique on hedonic effects

A well-known thought experiment for attacking the hedonistic utilitarian theory is Nozick's 'Experience Machine': "Suppose there were an experience machine that would give you any experience you desired. Superduper neuropsychologists could stimulate your brain so that you would think and feel you were writing a great novel, or making a friend, or reading an interesting book. All the time you would be floating in a tank, with electrodes attached to your brain. Should you plug into this machine for life, preprogramming your life's desires? (...) Of course, while in the tank you won't know that you're there; you'll think it's all actually happening. Others can also plug in to have the experiences they want, so there's no need to stay unplugged to serve them. (Ignore problems such as who will service the machines if everyone plugs in.) Would you plug in? What else can matter to us, other than how our lives feel from the inside?" (1975, p. 43).

If pleasure were indeed the prime motivator of human activity, as the hedonists claim, then people would probably welcome such a machine. However, according to Nozick (1975) most people would not choose to enter the machine because they value other things besides the pleasurable simulated experiences the machine could offer them. Although one can criticize the thought experiment on several points (e.g. Kawall, 1999; Belshaw, 2004; Silverstein, 2000; Baber, 2008; Lemos, 2002; 2004; Rivera-López, 2007; Athanassoulis, 2006), the arguments Nozick (1975) gives for not entering the machine and the thought experiment itself are very helpful for understanding the critique that befalls the focus on hedonic effects within the effect-centred approach of experiences.

#### Hedonic effects: appearance without content

First of all there is critique on the reality of hedonic experiences. Nozick argues that "plugging into an experience machine limits us to a man-made reality, to a world no deeper or more important than that which people can construct. There is no *actual* contact with any deeper reality, though the experience of it can be simulated" (1975, p. 43). This quote of Nozick may remind the reader of the discussion on the difference between primary and secondary experiences in chapter 3. The experiences in the

Experience Machine offer no contact with the 'raw material' and are constructed, and thus filtered, by human beings. The lack of 'real' contact with 'real' things is a point of criticism that can be found in many sources in which a critical position is taken against society's present attitude towards experiences. One of the terms used to describe this attitude is 'Disneyfication', based on the way in which Walt Disney has designed his themeparks. Disneyfication, or Disneyization as it is also sometimes called (e.g. Bryman, 2004), refers to a focus on outside appearance and control. First of all, Disneyfication denotes a focus more on appearance and design than on substance and reality. The focus is more on décor than on content. In the context of physical surroundings Zukin (1991) for example complains that there seems to be a trend towards 'landscaping', meaning that public space is increasingly being designed to evoke specific effects and experiences and that all other functions that public space has, are absorbed by the function of appearance (Mommaas, 2000). This raises the question of who should decide which factors should be taken into account in the design of physical surroundings. In their article on the authenticity of works of art, Ex and Lengkeek (1996) discuss the fact that in the ongoing search to build experiences, there are different types of authenticity one should take into account. Material authenticity means that something is made of the original material or by the original producer, conceptual authenticity means that something is made according to the ideas or intentions of the original maker, contextual authenticity means that something is properly located in its original surroundings, and functional authenticity means that the original use function has been preserved. One can see how Disneyfication and landscaping may result in a loss of authenticity on multiple levels. The focus on appearance and design also causes uniformity and hence a loss of variety in culture and design, a point of critique that is often cited by cultural critics. Hannigan (1998) for instance calls cities that have been Disneyficated 'Fantasy cities'. In these cities everything may seem real and original but there is a lack of adventure, unexpectedness, diversity and humanity (Hannigan, 1998). Klein (2002), in her book No Logo, sees this phenomenon in a wider context and notices that there is a lack of diversity and a trend of homogenization of culture in general, because of the focus on appearance.

This focus on appearance and the lack of adventure, unexpectedness, diversity and humanity that allegedly go with it, can also be related to the focus on control that is

inherent to Disneyfication. Everything is designed in such a way that the audience gets a feeling of safety and perfection, and people are comforted by the fact that everything is sanitized and managed, there is no place for unpleasurable surprises. This development has been coined 'disenchantment' (Ritzer, 1999), to denote the loss of the enchanted character of reality and the focus on efficiency and control. The environment has to be entertaining for people and people have to be able to feel like they have escaped everyday reality with its inherent surprises and risks during their stay. Disneyficated spaces may therefore seem public, but they really are not. "[Disneyficated spaces] are being controlled in a strict way and offer limited or even exclusive access. They are spaces for collective use, but at the same time private terrain, designed for the execution of productive activities, like shopping and other forms of leisure. This new public space seems to be ruled by planned technological and economic forces, for reasons of optimal manageability" (Deursen, 2001).

A comparison between these characteristics of Disneyfication and the pre-programmed simulations of experiences that people have while being plugged in into Nozick's (1975) Experience Machine can easily be made. Many authors agree with Nozick that real-life experiences are to be preferred to designed, organised and controlled experiences (e.g. Richards, 2001; Edensor, 1998; Battarbee, 2004; Bell, 1976; Boorstin, 1964), some referring to the latter as pseudo- or even non-events (e.g. Boorstin, 1964; Bey, 1985/1991). Individuals who choose to participate in this kind of experiences are referred to as calculating or programmed hedonists, who allow themselves to have fun and enjoy themselves but always in a planned, carefully controlled way (Desmond, 2002; Featherstone, 1991). They appear to have a 'real' experience, but instead they engage in "extreme sports which promise perfectly safe, 'near-death' experiences" (Desmond, 2002, p. 25) like bungeejumping, swimming with sharks protected by an iron cage, and river rafting. This type of behaviour is also referred to as the "controlled de-control of emotions" (Featherstone, 1991, p. 126; Desmond, 2002, p. 25). However, due to the lack of actual contact with reality, these experiences "are stale and dreary. That is why people quickly seek the next experience and hence rush from one disappointment to the next" (Jay, 2005, p. 160). Some people live under constant 'experience stress' ("druk van de beleving" (in Dutch), (Visser, 1998)) in their search for always more, and more intense, experiences (Schulze, 2000; Mommaas, 2000; Cauter, 1995). With all these immediate and intense experiences, every moment is dramatized, "to increase our tensions for a fever

pitch, and yet to leave us without a resolution, reconciliation, or transforming moment... This is necessarily the case, since the effects that are created derive not from content but almost entirely through technique. There is constant stimulation and disorientation, yet there is also emptiness after the psychedelic moment has passed" (Bell, 1976, p. 118). The individual is then perceived as a collector of separate pleasurable moments and memories, without paying attention to the coherence of his identity and life. In fact, Nozick has taken the thought experiment one step further, and proposes entering a Transformation Machine, which transforms the individual into any kind of person he would like to be. With this machine, we would not only believe we had become courageous, intelligent, loved or strong based on what we had experienced in the Experience Machine, but we would actually be all these things. More (1997) argues that these abrupt personality changes, which are caused by the machine, would lack the gradual aspect of 'normal' personal change and would cause a rupture in the chain of psychological connectedness and continuity that makes an individual the same individual over time. The challenge would be to use technology not just for providing individuals with immediate pleasurable experiences, but for enhancing the gradual personal growth and development of real human beings (More, 1997).

### HEDONIC EFFECTS: LACK OF ACTIVITY

A second point of critique on hedonism that Nozick expresses is: "First, we want to *do* certain things, and not just have the experience of doing them" (Nozick, 1975, p.43). One important reason according to Nozick, for people to not enter the Experience Machine, would be the fact that the individual would be passive within the machine and things would happen to him. "What is most disturbing about [Experience Machines] is their living of our lives for us. (…) Perhaps what we desire is to live (an active verb) ourselves, in contact with reality. (And this, machines cannot do *for* us.)" (Nozick, 1975, p.43). The idea that human beings are not passive entities, but rather are actively motivated, has received much attention also within the disciplines concerned with media and communication (Blumler, 1979). To explore the motivations that people have for their consumption of media, although the motivations may also apply to non-media consumption, McGuire (1974; 1976) has

provided one of the most extensive psychological models of human motivations, classifying them into 16 categories based on four dimensions: mode (cognitive – affective), initiation (active – passive), stability (preservation – growth), and orientation (internal – external), as table 4.1 shows.

| | Initiation | Active | | Passive | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Mode | Orientation / Stability | Internal | External | Internal | External |
| Cognitive | Preservation | Consistency | Attribution | Categorization | Objectification |
| | Growth | Autonomy | **Stimulation** | Teleological | Utilitarian |
| Affective | Preservation | Tension-Reduction | Expressive | Ego-Defensive | Reinforcement |
| | Growth | Assertion | Affiliation | Identification | Modeling |

Table 4.1 – Human Motivations according to McGuire (1974, p. 172)

The cognitive/affective dimension distinguishes needs focused on information processing versus needs for emotional or feeling states. Hedonic effects clearly belong to the affective mode. The active/passive dimension is concerned with the question whether behaviour is caused by an internal pressure (active) or as a reaction to external factors (passive). Hedonic effects as described so far in this chapter belong to the passive category, since they are evoked by external stimuli. The preservation/growth dimension differentiates needs for stability versus needs for change. Hedonic effects belong to the growth category, because the hedonic individual wants to feel something different from the ordinary. The internal/external dimension distinguishes between behaviour that is oriented at satisfying the individual's needs by adapting one's behaviour in the world (external) or by focusing inward (internal). The orientation of the hedonic effects that the Experience Machine

is focused on is clearly internal: since the individual is inside the Experience Machine, he cannot act in the world since he is himself cut off from the world. The pre-programmed experiences thus only have an impact on the individual's internal state of mind, not on the world external to the machine.

The need that belongs to the affective, passive, growth and internal category is Identification. Identification refers to needs for role-playing and identity adoption. Playing different roles and adapting the roles one already has, is assumed to be pleasurable for people. Examples of identification could be plugging into the Experience Machine to have the sensation of being a cowboy, or having one's picture taken in Madame Tussauds to have the sensation of being close to a celebrity. As can be seen in table 4.1, by focusing on hedonic effects as is done in the effect-centred approach to experience, only a small part of human motivations is taken into consideration. Furthermore, by playing out all sorts of scenarios and roles without connecting these to one's self, the hedonic experiences may leave the individual with pleasurable memories, but then much of the potential impact of experiences would be ignored. Human beings after all are not mere passive receptors or collectors of pleasurable sensations and roles to play.

#### HEDONIC EFFECTS: HUMAN BEING AS PASSIVE ABSORBER OF STIMULI

A third reason that Nozick gives "for not plugging in is that we want to *be* a certain way, to be a certain sort of person. Someone floating in a tank is an indeterminate blob. (…) Plugging into the machine is a kind of suicide" (1975, p. 43). The individual is treated as a "one size fits all"-receptor of electronically transmitted stimuli with the sole goal of evoking some pleasurable sensation or emotion. The idea of sending sensory input to individuals, even by the use of electrodes, is a less far-fetched aspect of the Experience Machine thought experiment. Although transmitting messages one-on-one to an individual's brain is still technologically impossible (Ambler, Ioannides & Rose, 2000), studies in the areas of neuromarketing are well under way of discovering how the brain reacts to affective messages. "In this ideal, or horrific, marketing world, advertisements could be fine tuned to maximize the intended encoding for the target market while minimizing effects for other individuals" (Ambler, Ioannides & Rose,

2000, p. 4). In principle, it would not necessarily be problematic if sensory input could be sent to individuals if these individuals could decide for themselves to accept the input or not, based on whether they wanted or needed it or not. However, this is not the case. The specific characteristics of hedonic experiences, and actually of experiences in general as I will explain in chapter 5 in the discussion of the so-called SEC-framework, make for a situation in which the individual has to have the experience in order to know whether he needed or wanted it. One cannot predict with certainty whether one will like a certain movie or whether a certain therapy will help in solving personal problems; one knows whether one liked a movie only after one has seen it and the time it takes to discover whether the therapy has helped may be even longer. The risk of disappointment when getting involved in experiences is then much higher compared to a situation in which one knows in detail what to expect beforehand. When an individual only has vague expectations, it is very difficult for him to predict whether the experience he is about to engage himself in, will satisfy his needs or desires. There is only one way to find out: experiencing.

When the individual has a desire for some pleasurable emotional outcome but does not have knowledge about which experiential alternatives will provide these, there of course exists a possibility that he may be disappointed with the experience. When a certain individual for example searches a feeling of excitement he has many alternatives to choose from, for example reading a detective, watching an action movie, going to the race track, bungeejumping, etcetera. Reading may result in too little effect, while bungeejumping results in too much excitement for the individual's taste. It is very hard to predict how much excitement will be just right for the individual and which experience will offer this level of excitement (Arnould & Price, 1993). Even when the individual finds an experience that satisfies him, the chance that the individual will be disappointed with the experience may grow in time since the newness and uniqueness of the first experience will diminish every time the individual has a comparable experience. Feelings of boredom may develop related to the experience, resulting in 'experience stress', or a need to find ever more intense experiences as was described earlier (Jay, 2005; Schulze, 2000; Visser, 1998). Nozick's critique refers exactly to this issue: who are we as human beings, if we are not just collectors of ever more and ever more intense effects?

### 4.2.2 The eudaimonic alternative for hedonism

An alternative school of thought called eudaimonism, shares Nozick's (1975) critique on hedonistic thought. The satisfaction of human motivations and desires and its consequences for the psychological state of mind of human beings has in fact been the topic of a discussion that extends at least as far back as the classical Greek philosophy. Within this centuries-long discussion one can recognize (at least) two perspectives: hedonism and eudaimonism. In fact many authors (e.g. Kraut, 1979; Waterman, 1993; Ryan & Deci, 2001) have paid attention to the differences between these two perspectives. I will discuss some main characteristics of eudaimonism based on the three points of critique that were explained above: the focus on appearance without content, the lack of activity and the view of human beings as passive absorbers of stimuli.

To start with the latter, the view of human beings as passive absorbers of stimuli is completely in line with my critique on the effect-centred approach of experience in current business and marketing literature. The focus in this literature on the role of organizations as managers of hedonic effects implies a very passive role of individuals, whose main role is often portrayed as in fact absorbing whatever organizations decide to confront them with. As I explained in the discussion of the bias within the effect-centred approach of experience in chapter 2 and as I will further explain in paragraph 4.3, individuals are not mere receptors or absorbing sponges but actively give meaning to what happens to them and as such they play an important role in whatever effects they will experience. I will explain this issue further in the following paragraphs so I will now focus on the other two points of critique, to show how eudaimonism intends to offer an alternative perspective.

#### Eudaimonic effects: first and second order desires

As has already been described above, hedonists argue that a happy person is a person who tries to maximize pleasure. The fulfilment of one's desires, getting what one wants, gives pleasure, which according to the hedonists is the goal of life. However, according to Kraut (1979), people do not just desire, but "it is natural and inevitable for us to develop a deep interest in whether or not such desires are being satisfied" (p.

172) and this 'deep interest' is what Kraut calls a second-order desire. He explains this concept by giving an example that closely resembles Nozick's (1975) thought experiment. If a person desires being admired by his friends and his friends deceive him by acting like they admire him, can we say that the person's desire for admiration has been satisfied and consequently that this person is happy? The person feels like his desire for admiration by his friends has been satisfied (second-order desire), but in reality they do not admire him (first-order desire). Just like the person in the Experience Machine is led to believe something that in reality is not true, also in this example the person is led to believe that he is admired, while in reality this is not the case. According to Kraut (1979), happiness involves the recognition that one's desires are actually being fulfilled. The deceived person may feel happy, but according to Kraut we cannot say that he is happy, since "[j]udged by his own standards of happiness, he has not attained it, though he is in the same psychological state he would be in if he had attained it" (1979, p. 179). The second-order desire of the individual has been satisfied, since he perceives or believes he is being admired, but he is mistaken so his first-order desire is not really satisfied.

Kraut (1979) also gives an example of a situation in which an individual's first-order desire is satisfied, but not his second-order desire. If the individual attaches much value to his family (first-order desire) and mistakenly believes that his family has been killed, can we say that his desire for having family is satisfied? He believes that he has lost his family (second-order desire), when in reality they are alive (first-order desire). Apparently, according to Kraut (1979), true happiness requires a satisfaction of both first- and second-order desires. Satisfaction of just the second-order desires may cause pleasure, or a feeling of happiness, but both are needed for true happiness, or being happy. The man-made appearance is not enough for eudaimonists, both second- and first-order desires have to be fulfilled.

The eudaimonists inspired by Aristotle's conception of eudaimonia, argue that the recognition that one's desires are fulfilled is indeed a necessary condition of eudaimonia but not a sufficient one. The additional condition is related to the second point of critique on hedonism: the lack of activity.

**EUDAIMONIC EFFECTS: ACTING IN LINE WITH ONE'S DAIMON.**

Aristotle argues that for eudaimonia it is also necessary that the individual engages in activities. These activities should be in accordance with an ideal, which has been termed virtue, optimal functioning, excellence, daimon, or the true nature or potential of the individual (Aristoteles, 1997; Nussbaum, 2004a; Waterman, 1993; Ryan & Deci, 2001). Where hedonic effects may be quite passive, as was argued by Nozick (1975), eudaimonia refers to activity of the individual. To take an example of Aristotle (1997) himself: "every random person, even a slave, may enjoy and find hedonic pleasure in bodily indulgences. However, no eudaimonist would call the slave happy in the eudaimonic meaning. Happiness is not a disposition of a person and cannot be found in amusement or passing the time indulging oneself, but to be happy in the eudaimonic sense of the word the individual has to be able to engage in activities that bring out the best in him, that make him function optimally" (p. 303, original in Dutch).

Eudaimonia occurs when the activities of individuals are in line with their daimon, with realizing their potentialities (Waterman, 1993, p. 678). In short the difference between hedonism and eudaimonia can then be expressed in the sense that a hedonic effect occurs when individuals get what they want and a eudaimonic effect occurs when individuals are engaged in an activity in which they can express who they are. Hedonic enjoyment is therefore an effect of a wider range of experience than eudaimonia. Activity in which individuals act in accordance with their daimon can lead to eudaimonic as well as hedonic effects, if it gives them immediate pleasure, but enjoyable activities in which the individual cannot or does not express himself can lead to hedonic effects but not to eudaimonic effects. Also, as was explained above, hedonic effects may even occur when the individual is not engaged in activity, while for eudaimonic effects activity is needed.

Examples of hedonic experiences that can have eudaimonic effects are flow or optimal experiences (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990), peak experiences (Maslow, 1970) and peak performances (Privette, 1981; 1983; Privette & Bundrick, 1991). Flow experiences or optimal experiences are states of being completely involved in an activity for its own sake. The individual is in a state of intense emotional involvement and experiences timelessness that comes from immersive and challenging activities

(Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). The activities can be described as intrinsically motivated, autotelic activities that individuals enjoy for their own sake, not for some external motivation like money, grades or status. For this reason the experience can be called hedonic. However, what also characterizes flow or optimal experiences is that there has to be a certain balance between the challenge provided by the activity at hand and the skills of the individual. Too much challenge relative to a person's skills leads to anxiety and disengagement, whereas too little leads to boredom and alienation. When the challenge at hand is slightly higher than the skills the individual has, there is a chance he will have a flow experience and because of the experience, his skills may grow so a higher challenge is needed for the individual to arrive in a state of flow the next time, because he has learned. This sense of accomplishment of self-competence is a eudaimonic effect that happens not immediately but as a result of the experiencing process.

Intrinsic value or motivation also characterizes the so-called peak experiences described by Maslow (1970). Peak-experiences according to Maslow (1970) are felt as self-validating, self-justifying moments that carry their own intrinsic value; they are ends in themselves, instead of means to some other end. Feelings like fear, anxiety, inhibition, confusion and conflict are said to disappear and the person experiences a sense of well-being, completeness and profound joy and significance (Maslow, 1970). Peak performance is an episode of superior functioning or full use of one's potential and is also, like flow and peak experiences, linked to self-actualization. Although the individual having these types of experience may enjoy himself while having the experience, and in that sense result in a hedonic effect, but effects may be very long lasting and profoundly impacting for the individual.

Another, but related difference between these two types of effects is that hedonic effects are immediate in pleasurable experiences, while eudaimonic effects can result from activities that at the moment in which the individual engages in them are not pleasurable at all, but that after time result in personal growth and development; the effects are thus indicative of distinct types of experience (Waterman, 1993).

### 4.2.3 The spectrum of psychological effects of experience.

The three points of critique about hedonic effects that I have discussed so far, the focus on appearance without content, the lack of activity and the view of human beings as passive absorbers of stimuli, are not characteristics of every type of experience. The spectrum of experience concepts I presented in chapter 3 shows that one can distinguish five different concepts of experience (secondary, primary, emotional, meaningful and integrative) of which the secondary experience is not considered an experience. Based on the descriptions of the psychological effects discussed above one can notice that the focus on hedonic effects in the effect-centred approach means that authors and practitioners within this approach pay more attention to the primary and emotional experiences than they do to the other types of experience. As was discussed above, hedonism can be defined in a narrow and in a broad way. The narrow definition sees hedonism as focused on physical sensations while the broader definition is focused on pleasurable effects in general. One would expect these two types of effects to be in line with, respectively, the primary and the emotional experiences as is shown in table 4.2.

| **Experiential concepts** | **Secondary experience** | **Primary experience** | **Emotional experience** | **Meaningful experience** | **Integrative experience** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Psychological effects | X | Narrow definition: sensory pleasure | Broad definition: pleasure in general | Less immediate effects like for example happiness or eudaimonia. | |
| | | Hedonic effects | | | |

Table 4.2 – Psychological effects for different concepts of experience

However, to arrive at a sound and integrative theoretical foundation for the experience economy from the individual's perspective, the broadening of the perspective on psychological effects beyond mere hedonic effects is not enough. One should also take into account the definitions related to the effects of experiences (see table 4.3) which were not primarily focused on psychological effects like sensory and other types of pleasure, but rather on knowledge and skills, which are more related to learning.

To be able to construct a theory for experience that takes into account the effects of the different experience conceptualizations that have been presented in chapter 3, attention should also be paid to these more cognitive effects. However, I will argue that managing effects is problematic. By relating the focus on managing effects in general to the study of the construction of meaning, called semiotics, I will argue that the management of effects by external parties is a difficult if not impossible goal and explore how effects could be dealt with in a way that other, more cognitive, meanings are also included.

| **Definition** |
|---|
| knowledge or skill which is obtained from doing, seeing or feeling things (CALD) |
| knowledge or practical wisdom gained from what one has observed, encountered, or undergone (D) |
| knowledge or skill acquired over time (OC) |
| Knowledge or skill gained over time (OD) |
| the knowledge and skill that you have gained through doing sth for a period of time; the process of gaining this (OAL) |
| The knowledge or skill so derived (AHD) |
| Knowledge resulting from actual observation or from what one has undergone (OED) |
| practical knowledge, skill, or practice derived from direct observation of or participation in events or in a particular activity (MW) |
| Personal knowledge derived from participation or observation (R) |
| the impression on a person or animal of events (CE) |
| the totality of the cognitions given by perception; all that is perceived, understood, and remembered (D) |
| The fact of being consciously affected by an event. Also an instance of this (OED) |
| The fact or state of having been affected by or gained knowledge through direct observation or participation (MW) |
| |

Table 4.3 – Definitions of experience that are focused on the effects for the individual

### 4.3 Limitations of managing effects in general

The focus in literature on the experience economy lies mainly on the role of the organization in managing hedonic effects, or effects in general for that matter. What happens when this is the focus is that the role of the individual as a meaning making being is neglected. The organization is perceived as a provider of stimuli that in the encounter with an individual are transformed into effects in a seemingly black box way. However, especially now that organizations are more and more recognized as cultural producers of symbolic goods (e.g. Rifkin, 2000; Richards, 2001; Featherstone, 1991; Levy, 1959; Schulze, 2000; Ter Borg, 2003; Hirschman & Holbrook, 1982) there is an increased need for a better understanding of the workings of this black box, of how meaning is created and effects come about. When goods are perceived as signs, as being symbolic, one needs an understanding of how meaning is created. There appears to be much concern about the neglect of this process of meaning making. In chapter 3, I discussed Reed's (1996) concerns about the dominance of secondary experiences nowadays, filtered and partial representations of the primary experience, that are not experiences in themselves.

However, Reed is not the only author who warns of this imbalance. "With an ever quickening turnover time, objects as well as cultural artifacts become disposable and depleted of meaning. Some of these objects, such as computers, TVs, VCRs and hifis, produce many more cultural artifacts or signs ('signifiers') than people can cope with. People are bombarded with signifiers and increasingly become incapable of attaching 'signifieds' or meanings to them. (…) People are overloaded by this bombardment of the signs" (Lash & Urry, 1994, pp. 2-3). This overload by a bombardment of the senses with signs has also been termed as "an inflation of the sign" (MacCannell & MacCannell, 1982, p. 132). MacCannell and MacCannell (1982) describe that it seems as if there is a sign-mechanism that produces images, texts and signs in people's everyday life. More and more, the focus seems on the automated production of "Tear-jerking, thrills and chills, suspicion, the supernatural" (p. 132). However, without paying attention to how individuals are supposed to cope with all these stimuli, the meaning-effect of the sign suffers from inflation. In the end this can lead to people taking signs at face value and just accepting one meaning without being critical and reflective in reference to the alternative meanings the sign could have. MacCannell and MacCannell (1982) call this phenomenon the 'illusion of

immanence': "the individual's dogmatic belief in a meaning. It does not refer to the truth or nontruth of that meaning" (p. 58). One, perhaps arbitrary meaning that the individual has attached to a sign is taken as 'the' meaning of the sign and because of a lack of attention for alternative meanings the "individual subjectivity is promoted to a position of theoretical and/or practical centrality" (MacCannell & MacCannell, 1982, p. 58). Not only would a mere focus on the supply of more stimuli lead to this 'illusion of immanence', it would also lead to "total mental chaos" (Falk & Dierking, 2000, p. 22). Falk and Dierking refer to William James (1890), when they describe that people are continuously bombarded with stimulations and that 'interest' is their filter. "(O)ne sees how false a notion of experience that is which would make it tantamount to the mere presence to the senses of an outward order. Millions of items in the outward order are present to my senses which never properly enter into my experience. Why? Because they have no interest for me. My experience is what I agree to attend to. Only those items which I notice shape my mind – without selective interest, experience is an utter chaos" (James, 1890, p. 403). This chaos caused by overstimulation or the supply of an excessive amount of disorganized, patternless or chaotic sensory stimuli can lead to confusion, bewilderment and impairment of the ability to think and act clearly (Toffler, 1970). "It is for this reason that practitioners of political or religious brainwashing make use … of sensory bombardment involving flashing lights, rapidly shifting patterns of colour, or chaotic sound effects - the whole arsenal of psychedelic kaleidoscopy" (Toffler, 1970, p. 310). There exist some classical techniques that people will make use of to cope with this overload (e.g. denial, specialization, reversion, super-simplification (Toffler, 1970, pp. 319-322)) but these techniques do not do justice to the complexity of reality and generate distorted images of reality.

The problem that is pointed out is that there is an abundance of stimuli, but also a lack of attention for the capacities that people need to make sense of them. When experiences are not considered as mere hedonic effects that are causal effects of the individual's encounter with stimuli in his environment, then attention should be paid to the process of meaning making.

### 4.3.1 The construction of meaning

When an individual interacts with his environment, which is the basis of every experience as we have seen, he is constantly confronted with stimuli via his senses. These external stimuli in the environment are all *potential* carriers of meaning. When the individual pays attention to them they transform into *actual* carriers of meaning, or signifiers. In this sense potential carriers of meaning can be defined as "any naturally occurring unit ('sign vehicle') that has the capacity to carry meaning," (MacCannell & MacCannell, 1982, p. 58) and it becomes an actual carrier of meaning or a signifier, only when someone sees it as meaning something. This distinction between potential signifiers and actual signifiers is important because everything is a potential carrier of meaning but the process of meaning construction does not begin until the individual observes it, as was indicated by the quote of Benjamin James (1890) earlier: "My experience is what I agree to attend to". Also Kolb (1984) explains the need for observation in the second phase of his cycle of Experiential Learning (see figure 3.6).

In experience terms, the signifier is the environment the individual interacts with. Most studies in semiology are biased towards the signifier, because it is observable and thus easier to analyse (MacCannell & MacCannell, 1982). In itself the signifier has no intrinsic meaning, in the sense that it has to be interpreted by an individual who invests it with meaning (Cornelis, 1995); in other words, a meaning has to be constructed. This meaning is what I will refer to as the signified or the content of meaning. For symbols, for example words, this process takes place relatively automatically when the individual already knows the symbol. The signifier is given a constant meaning, which is of course useful for communication. If everyone would interpret words in their own way, communication would be impossible. The same thing applies to other signifiers that have been given a fixed or common sense meaning, like for example a red light in traffic, signifying that you must stop, and the ticking with a knife against a glass, announcing that someone is going to speech. This fixed or common sense relation between signifiers and signifieds is what Breuer and Wuestenberg (1999) call anchors. However, also in many other cases efforts are made to predefine and fix the signified. Rigid codes of meanings are sometimes used, restricting or even censoring the active construction of meaning (MacCannell & MacCannell, 1982). This happens for example when some authority is telling people what a certain poem means, or what the painter of a specific painting or the architect

of a certain building meant with it. While these signifieds consist of secondary experience and hence of information that has been "processed - selected, modified, packaged and presented" (Reed, 1996, p. 3) by the authority, and are thus the signified according to this authority, it is often presented as 'the' meaning, 'the' truth.

Signifiers have no intrinsic meaning and imposing a signified on them restricts the process of interpretation by the individual. The range of possible meanings that exists for any signifier should lead to scepticism about claims for a single, definitive interpretation (Gottdiener, 2001). By forcing imposed meanings on individuals, they are being treated as passive recipients, not as the active constructors of meaning that they are. The signified that an individual attaches to a signifier is based on his interpretive framework. This framework consists for example of the prior experience, knowledge, motivations, cultural background, emotions, intentions, expectations, everything that a person uses to interpret his environment. Based on this framework, the individual can decide what the personal meaning of this signified is to him. Cornelis (1995) explains this process by using the example of a street-sign. When a person walks in a city and he sees a street-sign, he first has to recognize it as such and be able to read it. Only then does it become a signifier. The sign in itself does not have an intrinsic meaning, but when this person knows the city and has an idea of where streets are and how they are related, he can know where he is, based on the street-sign. The person has now attached a signified to the signifier, by placing the signifier in a bigger context. The meaning that this knowledge of where he is has for the person, the personal meaning, depends on where he is going, what he was planning to do, his intentions, his goals, etc. As long as he does not know this, there is no direction of meaning; the meaning does not become personal. Just as we saw in paragraph 2.4.2, the experience has to be appraised based on the individual's interests or concerns if he is to become emotionally involved (Frijda, 1988b). When the experience has no impact for the concerns of the individual, personal involvement will be low, and so will personal meaning. For the experience to have an impact on the individual, his interpretive framework should be involved which induces the individual to act in a goal-seeking manner, since individuals "are purposive in their actions and will act and react to environmental cues, objects and others, according to the meaning these hold for them" (Goulding, 1999, p. 866).

Using these terms of semiotics, we could describe for example Nozick's (1975) Experience Machine as a situation in which the individual is confronted with various signifiers by means of electrodes with the aim of having him attach a predetermined signified to them upfront, at the moment he programs the machine. The interpretive framework of the individual, which he uses for making sense of everything that happens to him at the moment that it happens, seems to have been left out. Perhaps this is what Nozick had in mind when he argued that an individual that enters the machine is nothing more than an "indeterminate blob" (Nozick, 1975, p. 43). Furthermore, the machine has been built and programmed by an individual or team according to their knowledge and skills and could never match the depth of genuine reality (More, 1997). In reality an individual has his own personal and unique framework of interpretation that can never be incorporated or replicated in something that is built or directed by others, let alone by one or just a few other persons. I will explain some of the problems that may occur when experiences are managed or directed by an external party in the next paragraph.

### 4.3.2 Problems related to externally directed meaning

When the interpretive framework of the individual is neglected, two errors in relation to the construction of meaning may occur: a syntactic error and a semantic error (MacCannell & MacCannell, 1982). In the case of a syntactic error, the signifier is taken at face value and there is no recognition of the fact that it refers to or represents something else, resulting in an uncritical absorption of the stimuli and impressions. In the case of a semantic error, the signified is taken at face value and one attaches a wrong meaning to the signifier. I will discuss both errors.

#### Syntactic errors: missing "that" there is a meaning

If one does not recognize the fact that a signifier means something, we speak of a syntactical error. It appears that based on the context in which people find themselves, specialized inferential systems in the brain are activated for complex interpretive processes like the detection of predators, cheaters, bluff, and so on (Cosmides & Tooby, 2000). Because of these systems in the brain human being can scan their

environment in a search for signs that something is wrong. But the meaning of signifiers is not always apparent immediately. It may well be that because of a change of context meaning can be constructed with hindsight. "A woman who has just found strong evidence that her husband has been unfaithful may find herself flooded by a torrent of memories about small details that seemed meaningless at the time but that now fit into an interpretation of covert activity" (Cosmides & Tooby, 2000, p. 126). Whereas the woman in this example did not notice that the details had meaning and hence made a syntactic error, the changed context caused everything to be reinterpreted.

The assumption that signs are taken at face value means that the context in which signs are interpreted is neglected. This can for example cause problems for organizational development programs. Organizational development programs are often implemented in contexts that have not been accommodated to the implementation, causing disappointing results (e.g. the Deerhunting metaphor (Morgan, 1997b, pp. 167-169)). Separating the essence of the development program from the context in which it is valid changes its meaning. But if one does not recognize that there is a meaning and that this meaning is dependent on the context, the program becomes a trophy on the wall, an isolated signifier that is taken at face value. Unfortunately this syntactic error will cause the program not to have the intended effects. In a similar way subject matters in education are presented in an isolated way, out of context, causing a loss of contact with the raw material as Dewey (1958) calls it.

Especially nowadays that the recognition of the symbolic function of consumption is growing, there is a greater need for paying attention to the process of meaning making and contexts. Research shows that people buy and possess things to which they attach signifieds that cannot be explained based on mere functional benefits and objective features (Holbrook & Schindler, 2003; Csikszentmihalyi & Rochberg-Halton, 1981; Dittmar, 1992). Examples are objects that have been invested with meaning because they stand for or remind one of rites of passage (e.g. wedding rings, the first thing one bought with his first pay-check, the backpack used during one's round-the-world-trip), accomplishments (e.g. trophies, diplomas), associations with other people (e.g. gifts, religious and ethnic symbols), memories (e.g. holiday pictures, souvenirs), etc. In all these cases the context is decisive for the meaning that the individual

constructs. Although many of these examples have a symbolic, representing, function as their main function, "other types of objects with a more clear-cut function can provide just as many meanings" (Csikszentmihalyi & Rochberg-Halton, 1981, p. 20). Objects like for example furniture, visual art, books, plants, and even TV's and stereos are imbued with meaning beyond their functional benefits (Csikszentmihalyi & Rochberg-Halton, 1981). What happens in this process is that the signifier cannot be taken at face value, because the context in which it was obtained or used, has influenced the meaning it has for the individual. The backpack used for one's round-the-world-trip, is not just a backpack anymore, and thus cannot be replaced by just another backpack. The individual is related to the object because of the meaning it has for him and the context it was used in has changed its meaning. Organizations that focus solely on the functional benefits of their products in their communication and marketing, make a syntactic error by not recognizing the meaning that the products may have for individuals.

### Semantic errors: missing "what" the meaning is

In the case of a semantic error the sign is placed in a wrong context, which leaves the individual with a flawed understanding of the actual or complete meaning of it. Highlighting one specific detail of a complex situation and presenting the situation as if that detail is the whole picture is an example of a semantic error. In other words, when the syntactic component is lacking, one misses the point 'that' there is a meaning, the signifier is taken at face-value, and when a semantic error happens one gets a wrong view on 'what' the meaning is, the signified is taken at face value.

The semantic error consists of not recognizing that a sign may mean different things under different circumstances. The assumption is that the sign will be interpreted in the same way by anyone confronted with it. However, individuals interpret signs in their context and construe meaning within this context. It is then possible that a valid meaning becomes invalid when used under different circumstances. An example is the validity of the rule that one should drive at the right side of the road. In the context of many countries this rule is valid. However, in the context of countries like the United Kingdom, Australia and South Africa, this rule obviously is invalid.

Now it is clear that we are dealing with an agreement here. It has been determined that in one country people should drive on the right side of the road and in another one should drive on the left. These are rules we all agree upon. The same thing applies to a language community in which we agree on the meaning of many words, making it possible to communicate and understand each other and other types of communities that have their own symbols (Cohen, 1985). However, one should always remember that these relations between signifiers and signifieds are in a way arbitrary. It is not a law of nature that we stop for a red light; this is something we have agreed upon. It is also completely possible to agree upon something else and change the meaning we give to certain signifiers. Ages ago a thunderstorm was interpreted as a sign that the Gods were angry, nowadays most people see it as a sign of electrical discharge. In the same way terms as burnout and stress are now used in a human context instead of the industrial context for which they were invented, causing a change in their meaning. Thumbs up nowadays is a sign that something is going well, where in other times it meant that the gladiator had to be killed. These signifieds are all a matter of agreement and convention.

Semantic errors often happen within communication processes between organizations and individuals, in which organizations provide the individual with their signified to "make sure that their symbols are always interpreted 'correctly'" (Christensen & Cheney, 2000, p. 257). Even when communicating 'the' meaning of buildings (Berg & Kreiner, 1990) or applying labels as 'heritage' (Franquesa & Morell, 2007) or 'nature' (Jacobs, van den Berg et al, 2002) the individual is provided with a signified as defined by an authority. What happens in these cases is that one perspective is made dominant and one signified is forced upon the signifier. However, "(o)bservation is never neutral; the gaze is directed from a particular point of view" (Hastrup, 1995, p. 4). The perspective someone has on reality, determines what he sees and what meaning he constructs. Perspectives are also referred to as worldviews, valuesystems or frames of reference, and social constructivism sees differences between these as the main cause for miscommunications (Huizing, 2002, p. 158). Every individual sees reality in a certain way and has certain interests, intentions, and purposes that cause him to direct his attention to certain aspects of reality and to attach certain meanings to reality, "meanings that are brought to it by the particular agendas of its users" (Halley, 1997, p. 194). Another person, with a different perspective, has different intentions and interests and pays attention to different aspects of reality.

However, perspectives that become institutionalized, like for example disciplines in science, can function as "organizers of information" (Douglas, 1986, p. 47), causing certain signifieds to become dominant. Institutionalized perspectives influence the way we view the world by teaching us how we should view it, what we should be looking for and paying attention to. When perspectives change, for example when our intentions change, we focus on different aspects of reality. When hungry, we look for food and interpret our environment in terms of edibility, but when our appetite has been satisfied we can focus attention on different things. When working, a car mechanic looks for broken things under the hood, he interprets the contents in terms of repairability, and when the car is fixed he can focus on different things.

We interpret our environment in terms of our intentions. We do not just observe, but we perceive by relating what we observe in our environment to our intentions and purposes. One has to be conscious of the fact that our intentions and purposes are not the only ones possible, that the way in which we order and categorize our environment is not the only possible way, that our perspective is not the only perspective and that therefore our meaning is not the only possible meaning. "I suppose it is tempting," says Maslow, "if the only tool you have is a hammer, to treat everything as if it were a nail" (1966, pp. 15-16). Perspectives work like filters or lenses and just like there are lenses that work better for looking at the stars, there are also lenses that are fit for looking at bacteria. The German philosopher Jean Gebser (1986) speaks of perspectivist reason or perspectivist rationality as a rather restricted vision of reality through the narrow lense of just one perspective. Every perspective in isolation gives us a partial, limited, or even distorted view of reality, and only by taking into consideration various perspectives and contexts will we gain a better understanding of the nature of reality. Reality consists of possibilities and only some of these are made relevant in given situations. By defining reality in a certain way, other definitions are excluded (Jansen, Jägers & van den Nieuwenhof, 2003). However no interpretation, perception or definition of reality is definitive or final (Gadamer, 2004), "rather it is a dynamic searching for the best interpretation of the available data" (Gregory, 1966, p. 11). However, when in the case of a semantic error a wrong meaning is considered as definitive and one does not search for a better, let alone the best, interpretation, one can imagine that problems may arise.

When a perspective limits the view of available possibilities, this can have serious implications for finding solutions to problems and answers to questions. Perspectives can "limit people's choice sets by indicating what is likely to be seen as viable or productive, and define the implications of their choices. They affect what people try to understand, what problems they attempt to address, and how they direct their imagination and learning toward the yet unknown and unused productive services of resources and (core) capabilities" (Huizing, 2002, p. 163). Problems are not fixed; people construct problems as responses to complex and troubling situations by selecting and highlighting some specific features and relations from reality and fitting these to the image that they have built of the situation (Schön, 1979; Saffer, 2005). When a problem has been "named and framed" (Schön, 1979, p. 264), for example by using a metaphor to describe it, the solution often seems obvious, restricting the consideration of all possible solutions. But when just a small portion of possible interpretations and possible solutions is considered, the chance that Gregory's "best interpretation of the available data" (1966, p. 11) is found is small, leading to poor practice (McMahon, 1999; Ashcroft & Foreman-Peck, 1994).

The conceptualization of syntactic and semantic errors clarifies some problems with the bias of marketing and business scholars who focus on the management of hedonic effects. Their objectivistic orientation on effects may lead to situations in which stimuli are sent to individuals without an understanding of whether these individuals will recognize them as signifying something (potential syntactic error) and if so, whether the interpretation by these individuals in their context will be in line with the meaning that the organization hopes or expects the individuals will construct (potential semantic error). Syntactic and semantic errors point to severe problems related to the ability to manage the effects of experiences. In this context, Tyrrell (1947) has put forward the terms 'convergent' and 'divergent' to distinguish problems that can be solved by use of logical reasoning and scientific method, from those that cannot. I will use the concepts of convergence and divergence to explore why there is so much attention for the management of effects and how one can deal with non-manageable effects by focusing more on divergence.

### 4.4 Convergence versus divergence in relation to effects

Tyrrell (1947) claims that convergent problems do not exist in reality, but are created by a process of abstraction. "The true problems of living (…) are always problems of overcoming or reconciling opposites. They are divergent problems and have no solution in the ordinary sense of the word" (Tyrrell, 1947, p. 89). Although a process of reduction and abstraction of reality can translate all divergent problems into convergent problems, the price of doing so in terms of knowledge is high. These problems cannot be understood or solved by subdividing them into their component parts, since systems are often destroyed when splitted up (Erickson, 1986). Graphically the difference between convergent and divergent problems can be presented as in figure 4.1.

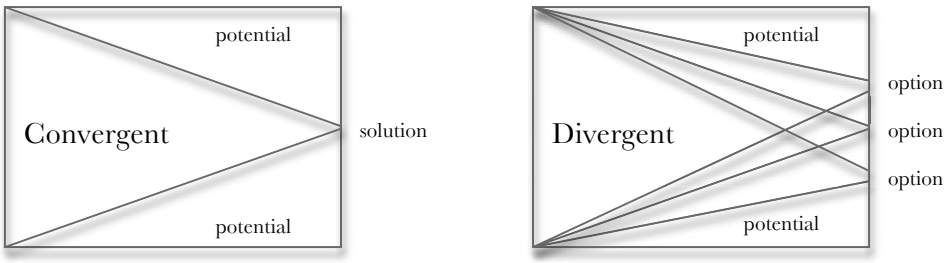


Figure 4.1 – Convergent and Divergent problems after Laurel's Flying Wedge (1993)

For a convergent problem the goal is the solution of the problem. The problem is 'named and framed' and the choices that have to be made are concerned with the most efficient and effective means with which to attain the goal. In the case of a divergent problem, choices have to be made related to which goal to strive for. There are many possible options and one first has to decide on which option to choose. By taking into account the multiple options and possibilities, the perspective is not restricted prematurely and more use is made of the potential for discovering a better interpretation of the available data. The concepts thus refer to two different modes of operation; one narrows the mental focus until it converges into a solution, the other broadens the mental focus in many different directions. Convergent thinking searches for solutions within existing frameworks and is oriented at the continuation of existing

structures, while divergent thinking places these existing frameworks and structures in a bigger context to be able to cope with change. Instead of a convergence towards one answer, one solution, in a situation of change or uncertainty there is a need for a divergent search for alternatives and possibilities to be able to make sense of the world, to find meaning in the world.

Meaning is constructed by individuals and can thus not be given or transferred to people like objects can. The construction of meaning is clearly a divergent problem, for which there is not one right solution. The individual interprets and relates to his environment within a certain context and by using his inherently personal interpretive framework. There is an unlimited quantity of possible contexts and unique interpretive frameworks since each person has a unique collection of existing knowledge, prior experience, concerns, motivations and goals. This makes the management of the interpretive process, with the aim of controlling the meaning that the person will attach to whatever happens to him a difficult, if not impossible, task. It would therefore be worthwhile to see whether there are ways to have individuals experience positive effects without neglecting the constructed and situated nature of meaning.

### 4.4.1 A BROADER PERSPECTIVE OF CONVERGENCE

Convergence and the focus on the management of effects can be related to more fundamental characteristics of society. Many authors concerned with modern Western society have focused on the dominance of one type of rationality at the cost of the other types. Weber, for example, has distinguished four types of rationality, in order to make a comprehensive list of the types of meaning that people give to their behaviour (Tromp, 2001). He describes that in Western society formal, or instrumental rationality, which involves a choice of means to ends guided by universally applied rules and laws (Ritzer, 1999), is highly dominant, at the cost of other types of rationality. In a similar vein, Habermas (1985) describes the colonization of the lifeworld by the system with its purposive rationality. In his viewpoint the focus is on the effective and efficient use of methods and means to attain predetermined goals. Although the dominant type of rationality has its obvious merits in terms of effective and efficient action, its dominance comes at the cost of

other types of rationality and causes a lack of attention for the goals themselves. The focus is on the means to attain predetermined goals, rather than on the goals themselves. Unfortunately, there are many situations in which the predetermination of goals causes a problem in terms of finding the best possible understanding of situations (Feenberg, 1996). We lack methods to evaluate the goals or ends themselves (Cornelis, 1995) and all divergent questions about what should be done are reduced to finding convergent technical solutions to given goals. Thus reason is restricted to instrumental reasoning, means-ends reasoning, or purposive rationality. The goals of action are considered fixed, and the only decision that has to be made has to do with the most efficient and effective combination of means to attain the goal (Habermas, 1985). Procedural and quantifiable correctness are the only valuable standards against which to make decisions, evaluations or judgments. The goals themselves are not questioned.

As we saw, every perspective offers a partial and different view on reality and holds its own definitions of various aspects of reality. According to one's perspective, one and the same situation in reality may appear a convergent situation for one person and a divergent one for the next. These perspectives on reality and the definitions that are contained within them can be seen as directive intentions (Cornelis, 1995). For example, the definition of a human being as an economic creature usually means that one should direct attention to economic problems and that economists and their views and ideas should govern the world. When a human being is defined as a physical creature, this means that all linguistic and social sciences are irrelevant. Definitions hide many kinds of directive intentions and problems may arise when concepts are missing to evaluate and adjust directive intentions, to determine the validity of the definitions in use (Cornelis, 1995, pp. 79-82).

Cornelis (1995) explains the problem by referring to the difference between what he has termed the social ruling system ('sociaal regelsysteem') and communicative self-direction ('communicatieve zelfsturing'). In a social ruling system, like modern Western society, individuals are supposed to obey to rules and norms and act accordingly; an action brought about by a clearly formulated rule which is rigorously followed and executed correctly, is always considered to be right (Cornelis, 1995, p. 197). This conception of the obedient individual comes forward from causal thinking,

the idea that one and the same cause will always result in the same consequences. In fact, a stone always falls downward, gravity does not learn. The laws of nature are unchangeable; this is where determinism finds its support. Within a social ruling system, a decision is made on what should happen and attention is paid to attaining this goal in a convergent way. In this sense the perspective within the effect-centred approach, with its focus on an organization that determines which effects the experience should invoke in the individual, resonates with the perspective of the social ruling system. But I want to argue in the next paragraph that this deterministic conception becomes mistaken when we try to apply it to a human being who is creating meaning in an experience (Cornelis, 1995; Schumacher, 1978). The convergent thinking that characterizes the effect-centred approach of the experience economy, with its focus on the management of (predetermined) hedonic effects, goes against the divergent thinking that is needed to understand how effects happen in individuals.

### 4.4.2 Convergence and divergence in the context of creating meaning

The methods of the social ruling system have been developed to control and produce the consequences of actions (Cornelis, 1995). They prescribe the course of action to arrive at a desired and fixed goal. In areas where consequences are fixed and known, these methods can function as intended. But in situations of change and in situations where new knowledge is produced and new meaning is constructed, one can never know for sure what the exact consequences will be. In other words "convergence may be expected with regard to any problem that does not involve life, consciousness or self-awareness" (Schumacher, 1978, p. 144). In situations that in fact do "involve life, consciousness or self-awareness", the goals are mere intentions because future events or consequences are hypothetical according to Cornelis (1995). First of all, one can never know the future objective consequences of actions, since knowing the future is empirically impossible. The existence of unintended consequences shows the hypothetical character of goals. The second hypothesis concerns the methods in use. The idea within the dominant type of rationality is that a certain method or program for action will be the most effective for reaching a certain goal. Here exists insecurity too, because only the future will tell whether the method was effective and perhaps more effective methods exist or will be found in the future. Therefore, the effect-

centred literature of many marketing and business scholars in the field of the experience economy, focused on techniques to manage certain effects in individuals, mainly contains hypothetical advice. The third hypothesis concerns whether intentions also reflect what will be valued in the future. When seeing the effects afterwards, perhaps the results will not be considered valuable, or not valuable enough. The third hypothesis is that the intentions will also turn out to be values in the future and will be experienced as valuable. Cornelis (1995) describes this hypothesis in terms of the validity of the directive purpose. The hedonic effects that are primarily focused on in the effect-centred literature may not be the optimal goal, for neither the organization nor the individual.

The neglect of these three hypotheses may cause three types of errors. Hence three types of learning are required, since learning can be seen as involving the detection and correction of error (Argyris & Schön, 1978). Errors on the level of events, when unintended consequences occur, are what we call negative feedback. Often an analogy is made referring to the workings of a thermostat. A thermostat scans the temperature of the environment and becomes active only when it receives negative feedback from the environment, in this case the fact that the temperature is either too high or too low. Receiving negative feedback can be placed in the first stage of the Experiential Learning Cycle (Kolb, 1984; see figure 3.6) and has been termed learning of the $0^{th}$ order (Cornelis, 1995) or Learning 0 (Bateson, 1972). The zero indicates that receiving feedback in and of itself is not a process of learning; learning happens only at the higher levels of correction (Cornelis, 1995).

The detection and correction of errors on the level of the methods in use is what we usually refer to as learning (Bateson, 1972). In this case the strategy, techniques or methods are made more effective or efficient, without altering the given or chosen goals, values or plans as I described in the discussion of the dominant type of rationality. This type of learning has been described as Learning I (Bateson, 1972), learning of the first order (Cornelis, 1995), adaptive learning (Senge, 1990) or single-loop learning (Argyris & Schön, 1978).

When errors are detected on the level of the validity of the directive purpose, the ends are no longer fixed, but critically approached and if required they can be altered.

Cornelis (1995) calls this type of correction takeback. In takeback the goals are continuously reviewed and what seemed important and valuable once, may not be important and valuable anymore. Takeback evaluates, as a decision afterwards, whether the consequences were intended (Cornelis, 1995, p. 307). The concept of takeback expresses a change of policy, a change in the choice of values as directive intention. Assumptions that underlie events and strategies are questioned and examined on an ongoing basis, and when found ill-fitted, they are modified. The correction of this type of errors has been described using various different names, for example: learning of the second order (Cornelis, 1995), double-loop learning (Argyris & Schön, 1978) and generative learning (Senge, 1990). Also in descriptions of wisdom one can find elements of this type of correction at the level of values and purpose. Weick (2005) for example, writes: "Wisdom is an attitude taken by persons toward the beliefs, values, knowledge, information, abilities, and skills that are held, a tendency to doubt that these are necessarily true or valid and to doubt that they are an exhaustive set of those things that could be known" (p.113).

The descriptions of these three types of learning show similarities with the three aspects of the construction of meaning I presented in the last paragraph: the carrier of meaning or signifier, the content of meaning or signified, and the interpretive framework. In the case of feedback, a potential carrier of meaning is recognized as an actual carrier of meaning, like in the example of the thermostat. At the level of methods, the focus is on the signified. Based on the predetermined goal of wanting to transfer a certain signified, events are interpreted and methods are used in accordance with this goal. At the level of takeback, the interpretive framework is involved. Values and assumptions are part of the framework that individuals use to interpret reality, so when these change, the framework changes.

Especially in situations of change and complexity, of divergent problems, the focus should be on takeback and the interpretive framework. When the hypothetical nature of intentions as described above is neglected or denied, people might unknowingly continue striving for goals that are not in line with their intentions and what they value. Becoming more effective and efficient at the level of methods, will then only help in taking people further away from their goals since they are working with old ideas and knowledge in new situations (Cornelis, 1995, p. 18). What is needed is reflexivity concerning the goals, and individuals need a framework that enables them

to choose among all the available options, since the old frameworks of traditions, rules and norms have either disappeared or are not sufficient anymore.

In divergent situations, the dominant focus on learning for achieving a predefined goal within one context should be substituted by a focus on learning about multiple perspectives to discover more possibilities and alternatives resulting in better interpretations of reality and creative and contextual choices (Jansen, Jägers & van den Nieuwenhof, 2003). When more perspectives on a situation are available, a more comprehensive view is obtained, providing more possibilities for action. "New insights often arise as one approaches situations from "new angles" and (…) a wide and varied reading can create a wide and varied range of action possibilities" (Morgan, 1997a, p. 4). Especially in a time of increasing divergent problems the variety of perspectives and possibilities becomes more important. A divergent problem cannot be managed in a strict, controlling way, since this would mean "to kill it" (Schumacher, 1978, p. 145), or "to instil deadness" (Lear, 1998, p. 3). By claiming that one has answered the question or solved the problem, one reaches a conclusion and is able to stop thinking critically and stop searching for alternatives.

The descriptions of the concepts of experience that were presented in chapter 3 show that meaningful experiences can involve convergent learning, but integrative experiences, which cause a change in the interpretive framework or worldview of the individual, always involve divergent learning. The learning effects for the different concepts of experience are shown in table 4.4.

Although many advocate a divergent way of thinking and learning, the advice on how to think and learn in a divergent way often remains vague and abstract. Insights from studies in the field of educational psychology can be used to understand more clearly what is needed for this type of learning.

| Concept of experience | Secondary experience | Primary experience | Emotional experience | Meaningful experience | Integrative experience |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Focus | Potential carrier of meaning | Signifier/ Actual carrier of meaning | | Signified | Interpretive framework |
| Learning effects | n/a | Learning of the nullth order, feedback | | Divergent learning, strategy | Learning of the second order; Divergent learning, takeback |

Table 4.4 – Learning effects for different concepts of experience

### 4.4.3 Supporting divergent learning

Scholars in the field of educational psychology have made various efforts in clarifying the distinction between convergent and divergent learning and how these may be dealt with. I will discuss two theories that are useful in understanding what organizations that want to support divergent learning should do.

#### From a surface to a deep approach to learning

Marton and Säljö (1976b; 1976a) make a distinction between surface and deep approaches to learning which show a great resemblance with the distinction between respectively convergent and divergent learning. "In the case of *surface-level processing* the student directs his attention towards learning the text itself (*the sign*), i.e., he has a 'reproductive' conception of learning … In the case of *deep-level processing*, on the other hand, the student is directed towards the intentional content of the learning material (*what is signified*), i.e., he is directed towards comprehending what the author wants to say about" (Marton & Säljö, 1976a, pp. 7-8) the subject. Where in the case of the surface approach to learning the focus is on trying to memorize as much elements of the sign as possible to arrive at precise and unambiguous knowledge, the deep approach is focused on understanding what is meant and how this meaning is

constructed, by relating the sign to other contexts and tasks, existing understanding and personal experience. The relationships between these elements result in the development of a cohesive whole, which is what constitutes the understanding of meaning, meaning that goes beyond the immediate task at hand (Cope, 2002). This "involves a change in an individual's way of experiencing a phenomenon. The internal relationship between the individual and the phenomenon changes as a result of new experiences of the phenomenon. The internal relationship involves more experiences or more or stronger relationships between experiences. The individual is able to reconstitute a more complex way of experiencing the phenomenon. The phenomenon is understood in a deeper way" (Cope, 2000, p. 15).

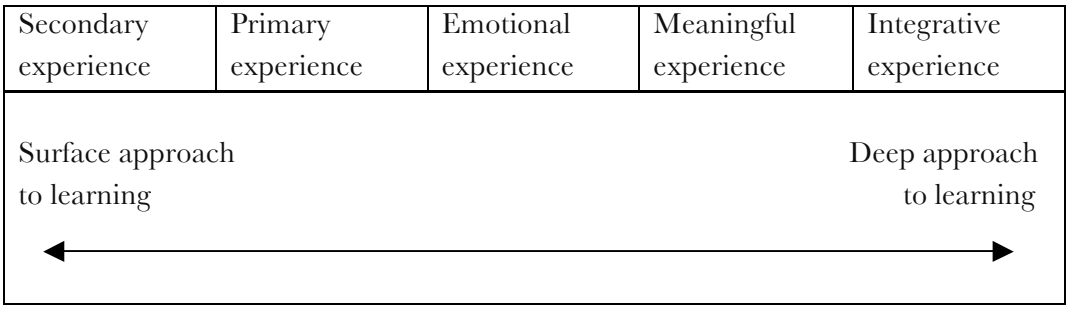


Figure 4.2 – Spectrum of experience concepts related to surface and deep approaches to learning

Marton et al (1993) distinguish six qualitatively different conceptions of learning, which have often been related to the surface and deep approaches to learning. The first three conceptions, A) increasing one's knowledge, B) memorizing and reproducing and C) applying, are consumption-related in the sense that the learning material is perceived as being taken in by and stored in the individual. Furthermore, in the first three conceptions the knowledge that is acquired by learning is seen as something ready-made, given, something that exists "out there", waiting to be picked up, taken in and stored. In these views on learning the individual is seen as a passive consumer of facts and knowledge. One just has to confront him with them and he will absorb them or take them in. Related to experience, one could argue that this is quite similar to how secondary experiences are seen. Produce something, confront the individual with it and effects will happen. The first three conceptions of learning can also be related to Erlebnissen. Increasing one's knowledge (A) and memorizing and reproducing (B) for example have a strong quantitative focus: the goal of learning is to

gain more (pieces) of knowledge (A) or to exactly reproduce the learning material in a test or performance (B). The hunger for experience and experience-stress of individuals that were discussed earlier, clearly allude to this quantitative focus on collecting more and ever more intense experiences, sensations and emotions. Also the goal of memorization and reproduction can be recognized in the current views on experience. Memorability is even claimed to be part of the nature of experiences (Pine & Gilmore, 1999, p. 6). If the individual is able to apply the knowledge that he has gained in the experience, we speak of learning as applying (C). The individual retrieves his memories of what has been learned and stored and is able to apply them.

The other three conceptions of learning are D) understanding, E) seeing something in a different way and F) changing as a person. The difference between the first three and the last three conceptions of learning is that in the last three conceptions meaning has a central role and knowledge is not something that exists "out there", waiting to be discovered and taken in. The conceptions of learning as understanding (D) and as seeing something in a different way (E) for example mean that the individual actively engages with the learning material. He or she relates parts of the material to each other or relates the meaning of the material to other events and ideas to understand (D) it better, or looks at the learning material as part of a greater whole beyond the context of study, so the effects of learning are located in the individual's lifeworld (E). Translated to the context of experiences, these conceptions show many similarities to Erfahrungen. The individual actively engages in the construction of meaning so the effects are not just immediate sensations and emotions but they are learned for the longer term, and effects do not necessarily have to be contained in the original context but may also spill over to other contexts of the individual's life. Also the sixth conception of learning that was distinguished by Marton et al (1993), changing as a person (F), can be related to Erfahrungen. The individual can for example come to see himself as a more capable person, because of his wider perspective on things.

The critical difference between the surface and the deep learning approach lies in the intentions of the individual (Rhem, 1995; Tereseviciene, 2004; Cope, 2002). The approaches are not personal traits of individuals, but they are chosen based on the perceived context and the resulting intentions and expectations (Rhem, 1995; Ryan & Deci, 2000). Individuals who perceive a task as resulting in an assessment of their

factual memorizing of the text are inclined to take a surface approach and hereby choose to try to remember as many facts as possible for reproduction at an exam. Since their intention is not a better understanding of the text, they can take a short term approach, reproduce everything they can remember at the exam and then forget. A surface approach to learning is characterised by an individual completing a task based on what he perceives as being expected from him (Cope, 2002), which results in an extrinsic motivation.

Extrinsic motivation is often considered as a singular construct, opposed to intrinsic motivation, but according to Deci & Ryan (1985; 2002) there are different forms of extrinsic motivation.

### FROM AN EXTERNAL TO AN INTERNAL PERCEIVED LOCUS OF CAUSALITY

In the Organismic Integration Theory, a subtheory of Deci & Ryan's (1985) overall Self-Determination Theory, they have described the distinct types of extrinsic motivation, presented in figure 4.3, based on the degree of 'internalization' and the 'perceived locus of causality' (usually referred to as PLOC).

| **Behavior** | Nonself-determined | Self-determined | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Motivation** | Amotivation | Extrinsic motivation | | | | Intrinsic motivation |
| **Regulatory styles** | Non-regulation | External regulation | Introjected regulation | Identified regulation | Integrated regulation | Intrinsic regulation |
| **Perceived locus of causality** | Impersonal | External | Somewhat external | Somewhat internal | Internal | Internal |

Figure 4.3 – The Self-Determination Continuum showing types of motivation with their regulatory styles and perceived loci of causality (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p.72)

The perceived locus of causality can be either internal (I-PLOC) or external (E-PLOC) (De Charms, 1968). I-PLOC means that an individual perceives himself as being the 'origin' of his own action or behaviour, while E-PLOC refers to situations in which the individual perceives himself as being a 'pawn' manipulated by external, heteronomous forces. The distinction between these two perceived loci of causality has often been used for the study of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, and for the study of perceived autonomy (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Ryan & Connell, 1989). Perceived

autonomy is an important aspect in theories of internalization, which suggest that self-perceptions of the reasons for behaviour can be differentiated along a continuum of autonomy. The more internalized the reason for doing something, called 'regulation' in this theory, the more the behaviour is experienced as autonomous and self-determined. As can be seen in figure 4.3, Ryan and Deci (2000) distinguish between external regulation, introjected regulation, identified regulation, and integrated regulation. These regulatory styles are all related to extrinsic motivation, but the degree in which they denote autonomous and self-determined behaviour differs.

External regulation means that behaviour is explained by reference to external authority, fear of punishment, rule compliance, or other external demands or contingencies (Ryan & Deci, 2000; Deci & Ryan, 2000; Ryan & Connell, 1989). This is the least autonomous of behaviours and it is difficult to maintain because when the contingencies disappear, the externally regulated behaviour is ceased (Deci & Ryan, 2000). In terms of effects of experiences, one can think of the example of an individual entering a location designed by an organization, in which he is experiencing all sorts of sensations in reaction to the stimuli that the organization confronts him with. When the individual leaves the location, the confrontation with the stimuli comes to a hold and so do the sensations that were evoked by the stimuli. When a formerly external regulation has been 'taken in' and is enforced through internal pressures such as guilt, shame or anxiety, this is called introjection (Ryan & Connell, 1989). Where externally regulated behaviour was controlled from the outside, the control is now executed from the inside, resulting in a still relatively controlled kind of behaviour (Ryan & Deci, 2000; Deci & Ryan, 2000). An example would be an experience in which the behaviour of the individual is controlled by a desire to maintain a good relationship with others and positive feelings about himself. Examples of reasons for behaviour would be the individual's desire for other people to think positively of him, or self-esteem-related, like the individual's desire to not feel bad or ashamed about his actions. The introjected regulation causes much anxiety for the individual (Ryan & Connell, 1989) and it is therefore questionable that this would be the best regulation for organizations to focus on. When behaviour is regulated through identification, the behaviour is more autonomous and self-determined. The underlying value and importance of the behaviour is recognized and accepted as personally important. The individual's actions now involve his own values and goals (Ryan & Deci, 2000; Deci &

Ryan, 2000; Ryan & Connell, 1989). The difference between the aforementioned introjected regulation and the identified regulation can be explained by referring to the difference between task-driven transfer of knowledge and free-choice transfer of knowledge (Pugh & Bergin, 2005). Task-driven transfer refers to situations in which knowledge learned in school is transferred to out-of-school experiences as a means to an end, for example to complete an assignment or to fulfil a task. It is thus subject to introjected regulation since the individual is not in school at the moment he is using the knowledge, so the regulation is not external, but he is not using the knowledge out of his own free will, so the regulation is not identified. Free-choice transfer refers to situations "in which the context affords transfer but the transfer is not needed to engage in the activity" (Pugh & Bergin, 2005, p. 17) Pugh and Bergin (2005) give an example of how this free-choice transfer takes place: when an individual visits the zoo, he is not required to apply the ideas he has learned in biology classes in school. However, because of the classes, he may have become intrigued by ideas on animals and how they adapt to their environment and be motivated to learn more about this process in the zoo. Reasons falling in the category identified regulation can often be expressed with claims like 'Because I want...', 'Because I think it is important to...', 'Because I am interested in...', because they refer to self-valued goals of personal importance (Ryan & Connell, 1989). Finally, the most autonomous or self-determined form of extrinsic motivation is integrated regulation. The identified regulation is now fully assimilated to the self, which means it is evaluated and brought into congruence with one's other values and goals. In other words: there is not only identification with the value and importance of the behaviour, but the identification becomes part of the identity of the individual (Ryan & Deci, 2000; Deci & Ryan, 2000).

Shifting from external regulation to integrated regulation in figure 4.3, there is an increase of autonomy and ownership of the behaviour (Deci & Ryan, 2000). In terms of autonomy, the integrated form of extrinsic motivation is very similar to intrinsic motivation. The difference between integrated and intrinsic behaviour is based on the fact that with integrated regulation the behaviour is still extrinsically motivated, meaning that the activity is performed in order to attain some separable outcome. Intrinsic motivation means that no separable outcome is sought, but that an activity is performed for the inherent satisfaction and enjoyment of the activity itself (Ryan & Deci, 2000). The increased autonomy and ownership for regulations with an internal

perceived locus of causality (I-PLOC), means that effects of experiences that have a relatively high I-PLOC, cannot be forced upon individuals. Individuals have much autonomy and ownership and therefore have a big impact on the effects themselves. Marketing and business scholars in the field of the experience economy, often focus on the management of experiential effects as I stated in chapter 2. The objectivistic perspective that is taken in this literature as I stated in chapter 2, can be related to actions resulting in an external perceived locus of causality. If organizations focus on sending, staging, producing and making stimuli with which to stimulate the sensations and emotions of individuals, they are trying to influence the individual from the outside, hence the focus on E-PLOC. However, the more one shifts to the right on the spectrum of experience-concepts, the more difficult it becomes to maintain this focus on an external perceived locus of causality. Organizations can undoubtedly confront individuals with certain stimuli resulting in predictable effects to a certain degree. When individuals are confronted with the ice in an icebar, the well probably sense the cold and when they are surrounded by fire they will probably feel the heat. However, how they experience these sensations and what, if any, emotions are evoked by the experience, cannot be completely managed. Therefore, the more that one shifts to the right on the spectrum of experience concepts, the more the focus should be on I-PLOC, not E-PLOC. Attention for I-PLOC should be greatest in meaningful and integrative experience because when it comes to learning and changing one's interpretive framework the organization only has a limited impact on the effect that the individual experiences (see figure 4.4).

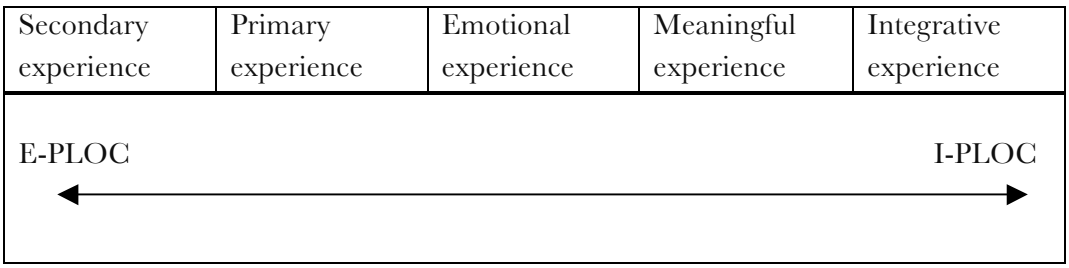


Figure 4.4 – Locus of causality for different concepts of experience

The importance of the degree of autonomy of behaviour and the positive effects of autonomy have been studied extensively in many different fields of research ranging from sports to religion, from political issues to health-related behaviour, and from

New Years' resolutions to education (Deci & Ryan, 2000). In terms of positive effects in the context of learning, autonomy has been found to be related to creativity, conceptual understanding, cognitive flexibility, improved problem-solving and an overall better performance of activities that require attention, creativity and resourcefulness (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Benware & Deci, 1984; Deci, Koestner & Richard, 2001; Zuckerman, Porac, Lahtin, Smith & Deci, 1978; Amabile, 1998). This has in fact been one of the reasons for theorists to investigate the way in which the internalization of regulations can be improved and behaviour can be more autonomous (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

According to the Self-Determination Theory, autonomy is an essential, but not the only basic need that has to be supported and fulfilled for a regulation to be internalized. A second basic need is competence. The individual has to be able to understand the regulation that he is expected to internalize and he has to be able to do so. Providing him with a meaningful rationale of the regulation and taking care of the balance between his skills and the challenge he is presented with, are thus very important (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Studies have shown that when individuals understand the way in which the regulation can help them, they become more engaged and involved with it, with many positive effects for their performance. A study of Benware and Deci (1984) for example describes an experiment in which one group of students is asked to read a text with the aim of answering questions on an exam, and the other group is asked to read the same text with the aim of teaching the contents to other students. Results showed that the latter group performed much better in terms of process learning (learning how to learn), while both groups performed equally on the level of rote learning. Both groups were extrinsically motivated, but the difference appeared to result from the active orientation that the group that was asked to teach the material had. Because of this active orientation, the material was more internalized by individuals in this group, than it was by individuals in the group that was told they would be tested. Similar to what educational psychologists as Marton and Säljö (1976a; 1976b) have indicated: the rationale that is given for engaging in an activity influences the expectations of individuals and affects their behaviour. The balance between the skills of the individual and the challenge he is presented with has been extensively studied in the context of flow experiences. Too much challenge relative to a person's skills leads to anxiety and disengagement,

whereas too little leads to boredom and alienation. Success at optimally challenging tasks is what allows people to feel a true sense of competence.
The third basic need is relatedness. This need refers to the desire to feel connected to others and to integrate oneself within the social community (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Relationships with others should be supportive, secure and trusting, because otherwise it would be difficult for individuals to express their autonomy and competence. Fulfilling the need for relatedness is possible by recognizing the inner feelings and experiences of the individual and taking his perspective. Although there are situations in which one can imagine that relatedness is less central than the other basic needs, for example activities that one engages in alone (Deci & Ryan, 2000), the alleged decrease in trust within relationships that nowadays is receiving more and more attention (e.g. Zuboff & Maxmin, 2002; Singh, Jayanti, Kilgore, Agarwal & Gandarvakottai, 2005; Shore, 2003a), may be a reason for paying special attention to this need.

By focusing on the fulfilment of all of these three basic needs, autonomy, competence, and relatedness, external regulations can become more and more internalized, which may cause the individual to become more involved in the experience, and the effects to last longer. By maintaining a focus on an objectivistic stance towards the effects and trying to 'send' effects to individuals or manage effects without paying attention to the internalization of the regulations, the organization focuses more on a convergent form of meaning-making and takes a surface approach to the meaning that is constructed, The individual is urged to construct or better said reproduce the meaning that the organization has chosen for him. First of all the construction of meaning is never a one-way process of one party sending a meaning and the other party taking it in as I have argued in this chapter, but second of all, the deep approach of divergent learning will lead to more relevant and long-lasting effects for the individual.

## 4.5 Conclusion

The problem of which the effect-centred approach of experience suffers as I argued in chapter 2 is a bias in the discourse of business and marketing scholars who focus primarily on the role of organizations in managing and producing predetermined hedonic effects, hereby neglecting the role of the individual and the existence of other

effects. The research question I therefore wanted to answer in this chapter is "Which kinds of effects can experiences have from an individual's perspective?" Table 4.5 contains my answer to this research question, relating the different effects that have been discussed in this chapter to the five concepts of experience that were presented in chapter 3.

<table>
<tr><td>Experiential concepts</td><td>VICARIOUS EFFECTS</td><td>Secondary experience</td><td>Primary experience</td><td>Emotional experience</td><td>Meaningful experience</td><td>Integrative experience</td></tr>
<tr><td>Psychological effects</td><td></td><td>X</td><td>Narrow definition: sensory pleasure</td><td>Broad definition: pleasure in general</td><td colspan="2" rowspan="2">Less immediate effects like for example happiness or eudaimonia.</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td><td colspan="2">Hedonic effects</td></tr>
<tr><td>Focus</td><td></td><td colspan="3">Signifier/ Potential carrier of meaning</td><td>Signified</td><td>Interpretive framework</td></tr>
<tr><td>Learning effects</td><td></td><td>n/a</td><td colspan="2">Learning of the nullth order</td><td>Learning of the first order; Convergent learning</td><td>Learning of the second order; Divergent learning</td></tr>
<tr><td>Approach to learning</td><td colspan="6">Surface approach to learning ◄——————————————————► Deep approach to learning</td></tr>
<tr><td>Perceived Locus of Causality</td><td colspan="6">E-PLOC ◄——————————————————► I-PLOC</td></tr>
</table>

Table 4.5 – Spectrum of experience effects

First I have shown why a focus on purely hedonic effects causes a lack of attention for other positive but less immediate effects, like eudaimonic effects, knowledge and skills. I have done this by first exploring the three points of critique on hedonism that can be deduced from Nozick's (1975) thought experiment 'The Experience Machine'. Based on this thought experiment one can ask whether human beings would be content living a life in which they are only confronted with man-made appearances and without actual contact with the raw material. Another question is whether it would be enough for individuals to passively experience pleasurable sensations and not actually do something themselves. A third question I discussed was whether human beings can be considered as being mere collectors of ever more and ever more intense effects and sensations. According to critics of hedonism, for example the eudaimonists, the answer to these three questions is a clear no and I have explained why in the discussion of the eudaimonic philosophy.

Consequently I have argued that effects cannot be fully produced and managed by an organization since they are constructions of meaning by individuals. The shift in focus from mere sensations and pleasurable effects to the construction of meaning and learning also follows the definitions of experience that are focused on the effects for the individual presented in paragraph 2.3. Organisations can provide individuals with signifiers or potential carriers of meaning but they cannot produce or manage some predetermined signified. Trying to produce and manage a predetermined signified indicates a focus on convergent thinking. Current literature on the experience economy shows a lack of attention for divergent learning, since its focus is on achieving a predetermined goal, for example to cause the individual to laugh, to feel excited or to be in awe. This focus is in line with the surface approach to learning, in which the goal is for the individual to gain, memorize, reproduce or apply a predetermined effect or message of another party. A divergent attitude on the other hand is related to the deep approach to learning, which leads to more meaningful learning and longer-lasting effects. I therefore plead for organizations to support the individual in taking a deep approach to learning in the experience and hereby stimulate divergent thinking. The locus of causality, which in the current business and marketing literature in the field of the experience economy is often still mainly external, should become more internal, by focusing more on the autonomy, relatedness and competence of the individual in the experience.